

Piping plover pair renests at Gordons Pond

Three chicks take flight on the Point at Cape Henlopen

LEWES – A pair of piping plovers that lost their nest at Gordons Pond in Cape Henlopen State Park has regrouped and nested again within the park, with three eggs observed so far, DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife announced today. Another nest is still being incubated on the Point, with hatching expected over the next few days.

Three broods of piping plover chicks are continuing to forage on the Point, with one of the broods having fledged three chicks earlier this week, according to Division of Fish & Wildlife Biologist Matthew Bailey.

In other beachnesting bird news, the American oystercatcher nest on the Point is due to hatch this week, and least terns continue to defend their colony at Gordons Pond, Bailey added.

For more information about beachnesting birds and monitoring efforts, please contact Matthew Bailey at 302-382-4151 or email matthew.bailey@delaware.gov.

About the piping plover

The piping plover was listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1986, and the Division of Fish & Wildlife is responsible for its protection in Delaware. Under a binding agreement and species management plan that DNREC made in 1990 with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – the federal agency with oversight of this ESA-protected species – piping plover nesting areas at Cape Henlopen State Park are closed annually to the public to protect the shorebirds from disturbance during their nesting season from March into September. The closure, which includes the Point and smaller areas around Gordons Pond and with both

feeding habitat and nesting areas protected, has been successful, increasing the number of piping plover nesting pairs from a low of two pairs to a high of nine pairs. Piping plovers feed on small invertebrates that inhabit the intertidal zone near their nesting territories. Chicks are not fed by their parents, but rather are led to the shoreline to forage while the adults keep watch for potential threats. Allowing pedestrian traffic in the intertidal zone adjoining nesting areas would disturb the vital link between nesting and foraging habitat, and risks adverse stress or mortality to the chicks.

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